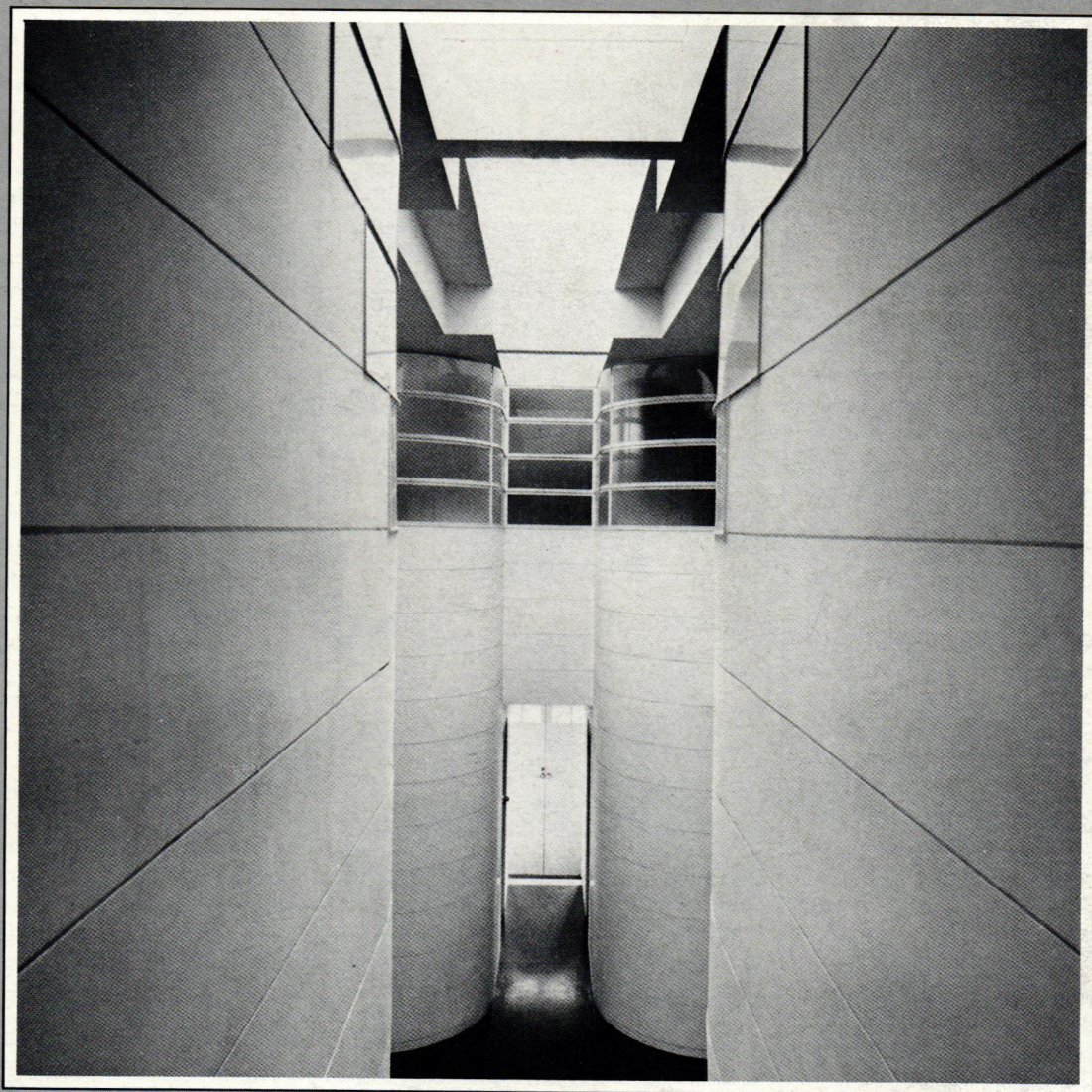


San Francisco Bay Architects'

REVIEW



Progress and Tradition
Impressions of Modern Architecture in Japan

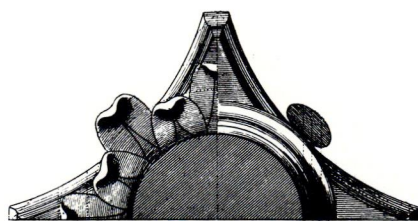
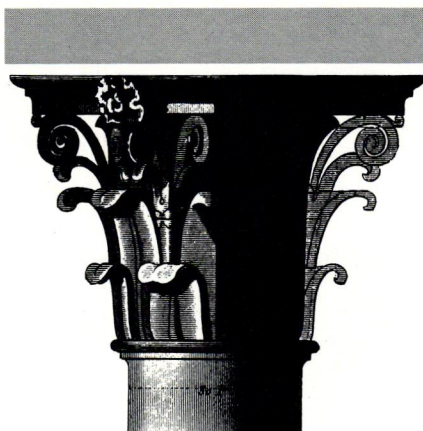
COMMENTS

A Critique of the Biennale Show

by JOHN LOUIS FIELD

ARCHITECTURE IS the most public of the arts — it requires only a financially able client for the designer to add a highly visible part of the environment shared by everyone. Yet, there is nothing more difficult for most architects than to communicate about what they think to those in the world beyond their professional brethren. Like it or not, the architects make their public statements through their buildings, the interpretation of architecture comes from people feeling and experiencing buildings. This often leaves the public confused and frustrated and the architects misunderstood.

There-in lies the problem with the exhibit, *Presence of the Past*, on display at Fort Mason through 20 July. It is presented just as an architect puts his building into the environment — without identification and descriptive material. If it is an exhibit about architecture for the world of architects, then it is a fascinating exploration of the ideas, questions, and uncertainties in architects' minds at a time of significant change in the prevailing attitudes emerging over the last 70 or 80 years. But the community commitment that brought this show from the 1980 Venice Biennale to Fort Mason is so great that it must have been at least partly intended to be of interest to the general public. To understand this show most people need to know more about the architects and their work as well as some explanation of what they were trying to say. Someone putting together the exhibit should have realized that it is hard to laugh at a joke told in a foreign language one doesn't un-



derstand. A taped guided tour or at least labels on the drawings and brief explanations of the materials being presented would make the show more intelligible.

The stage street is, however, a marvelous *tour de force* dramatically presenting architecture as experience. We are like *Alice in Wonderland*, falling down the hole and looking with new eyes at the familiar which is not at all what it always seemed. The scale of "La Strada Novissima" is a grand one, familiar in Europe but rare for Americans. It gives strong edges of the street space for our experi-

ence. There is a power that is both exotic in its images and comforting in its containment. It makes an exciting place. The individual buildings are perhaps too aggressive in their singular statements to be a totally satisfying urban design; but, as a vivid metaphor for the parallel and cross currents in architectural thought today, the streetscape is a vibrant and exciting experience even if it requires serious effort to assimilate the ideas there. In the short length of "La Strada Novissima" there are more contrasts than agreements about aesthetics. This is not a show by and about people who have all the answers. It is an exhibit about the artists in search, where roots of all kinds seem to validate rather than compromise as the modernists believed. It is an honest expression of the uncertainties that are a basic part of being an architect.

Frank Gehry presents his deliberate industrial sensitivity that avoids Mies' vision of inherent elegance while next door Constantine Dardi gives the passerby a wonderful facade of a Le Corbusier white stucco composition with complex diagonal penetrations. Phillip Johnson felt no need of a facade. His recent buildings, completed and on the boards, said what he had to say. One of the most successful facades was done by Leon Krier in which he brought together images of the past that evolved into an uncompromising contemporary statement that has integrated old and new in a way that seems entirely comfortable on its own. In contrast to this, Michael Graves' facade and interior

Continued on page 23

I N S I D E

A Wider View of The World

Introduction By JOHN PARMAN

THIS ISSUE represents something of a departure for the *Bay Architects Review*, in that it focuses on the architecture of another culture, rather than on our immediate surroundings and the visitors who come to it. In a sense, it also represents a feeling on the part of the *BAR*'s editorial board that we have reached a point, as a publication, when we can afford to take a wider view of the world.

From my perspective, it is also an issue that addresses a topic that has long been of interest. I became interested in modern Japanese architecture in the late '60s, when I studied with Udo Kultermann at Washington University. Although as mystified as anybody over the written work of the Metabolists, I was quite taken by their buildings, which seemed as expressive in their own way of the feeling of that era as, for example, Wurster Hall is in describing something of the same mental territory.

In the mid-'70s, I had the good fortune to work with Minoru Takeyama, who might be described as an architect's architect—one of the few people I've met who manages to make architectural thought palatable as everyday conversation. Through him, I got some feeling for architecture as seen by the Japanese, and realized both its foreignness to Western thought patterns and its peculiar attractiveness—the attraction of something which turns one's usual assumptions on their head.

In 1981, my friend Marsha Maytum told me she and her husband were going to Japan. This struck me as a good moment to do an issue—"two architects from San Francisco go to Japan" was my first working title. Although they have resisted my natural predilection for a *Holiday Magazine* approach to their subject matter, they have managed to put together an exceptional issue, with articles by the critic Watanabe, architects Takeyama and Maki, a short interview with Ando, and their own synopsis of their travels, with an excellent account of their encounters with Ando and Hara.

Marsha Maytum and husband Bill Leddy deserve full credit for this issue, which is really the product of their efforts and tenacity. I will take credit for the first round of editing (John Burks can take credit for the second), but as this work was carried out in Waikiki, I can hardly describe it as the labors of Hercules. The real credit, however, should go to our Japanese contributors—both for their hospitality in receiving their San Franciscan guests and for their generosity in contributing material for the issue.

Marc Treib, Professor of Architecture at Berkeley and a well-known commentator on Japanese architecture, also contributed an article for this issue which, because of limitations of space, we were unable to use. I regret this, because Treib's view of the Japanese scene is well-informed and worth reading. To compensate him and the reader, I am willing to send copies of his short article. If you are interested, send me a self-addressed, stamped envelope. My address is 1421 Arch St., Berkeley 94708.



William Leddy

PROGRESS and TRADITION: J

By MARSHA MAYTUM and WILLIAM LEDDY

THE RECENT much-publicized success of Japanese business and industry in the international marketplace has focused Western attention upon the unique and innovative quality of that culture. While a growing number of disciplines in the West have turned to Japan for models of the future, interest in other aspects of her culture has also increased. Long appreciative of the traditional buildings of Japan, Western architects have become aware of Japanese modern architecture with its bold forms and rigorous ideals.

As with the other products of Japan, the rising Western interest in this work signals its relevance at an international level. What the Japanese have done for the automobile industry and the microchip, they are now doing for modern architecture—providing uniquely Japanese responses to conditions shared throughout the industrialized world.

Among these common conditions is the current worldwide upheaval in architectural thought. The Modern Movement has long been declared a failure and the scramble for new styles proceeds apace. But, as Ada Louise Huxtable has argued¹, the changes taking place in architecture today are not simply self-indulgences of taste. More importantly, they reflect the deep-seated disillusionment of a large part of society with the cultural value systems of which the Modern Movement is only one part. Faith in the power of technology to create a utopian world has given way to cynicism about the future.

The depth of change brought about by unbridled technological progress has produced vast improvements in the quality of life, but it has also tended to destroy cultural tradition and bury history. It has shaken what Christian Norberg-Shulz calls our "existential foothold"—our sense of place and of meaningful existence in the world. The current international debate in architecture is, to a large extent,

addressing the relationship between technological progress and cultural tradition in an attempt to regain that foothold.

Few places in the developed world have a more intense relationship between progress and tradition than Japan. Isolated for hundreds of years from outside influence, this island culture was thrust into the industrialized world a little over a century ago. In the comparatively short period since then, Japan has changed from an entirely agrarian, feudal society to a modern industrial giant. Drawing on an historical penchant for borrowing and adapting useful aspects of foreign cultures (notably Chinese and Korean), the Japanese successfully adapted 20th century technology to a level virtually unmatched in the world.

Yet many traditions have survived intact. The ability of Japanese society to maintain these ancient customs in the midst of a frenzied modern existence is due both to the strength of those traditions and to the ability of the culture to accept such apparent dualities as parts of a greater whole. A country which for centuries has successfully practiced two religions simultaneously (Buddhism and Shintoism) can readily accept the contradictions inherent in modern Japanese society and the remnants of its feudal past.

The result is a nation which presents stark contrasts to the Western eye—a place where *Kojak* and kabuki coexist in perfect harmony, where bullet trains slash across the countryside rattling shoji screens in ancient farmhouses, and where exquisite Buddhist temples are found snuggled between McDonald's and Mr. Donut. Technology and tradition are fused into a dynamic, pulsating culture; a techno-frenzied, hyper-industrialized megatropolis, with one foot still firmly planted in the feudal era.

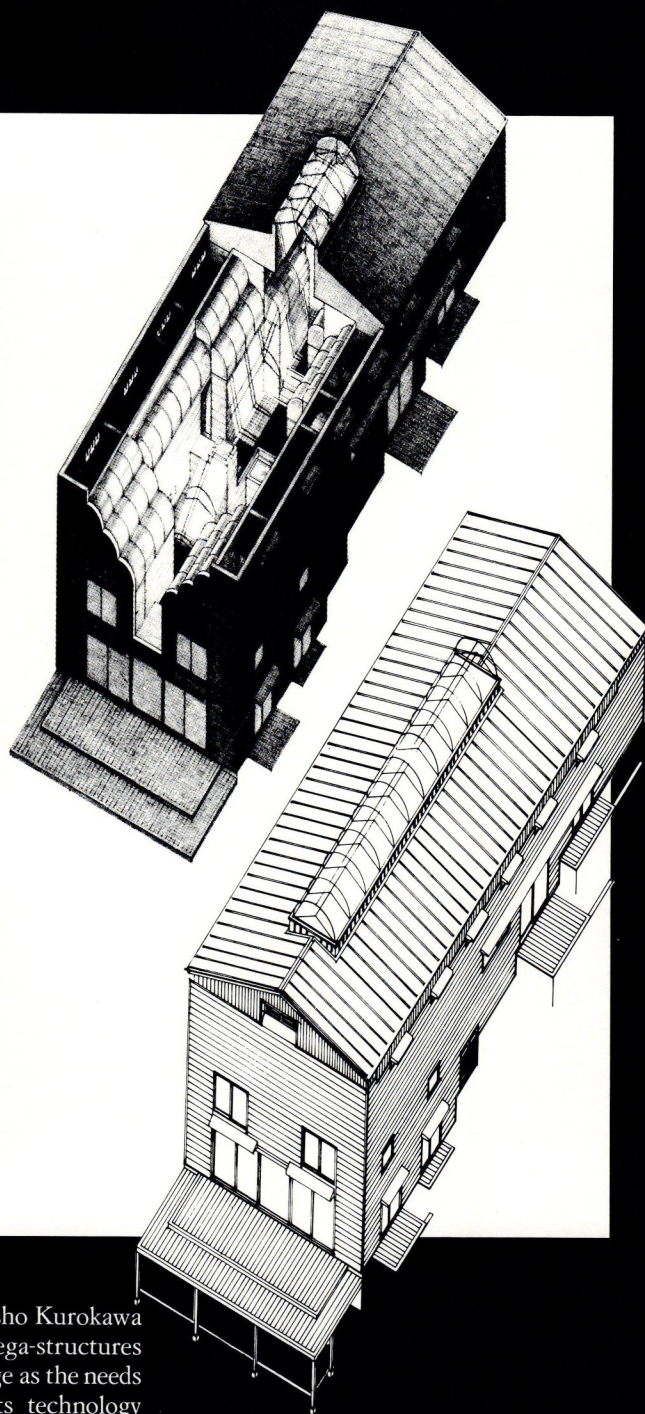
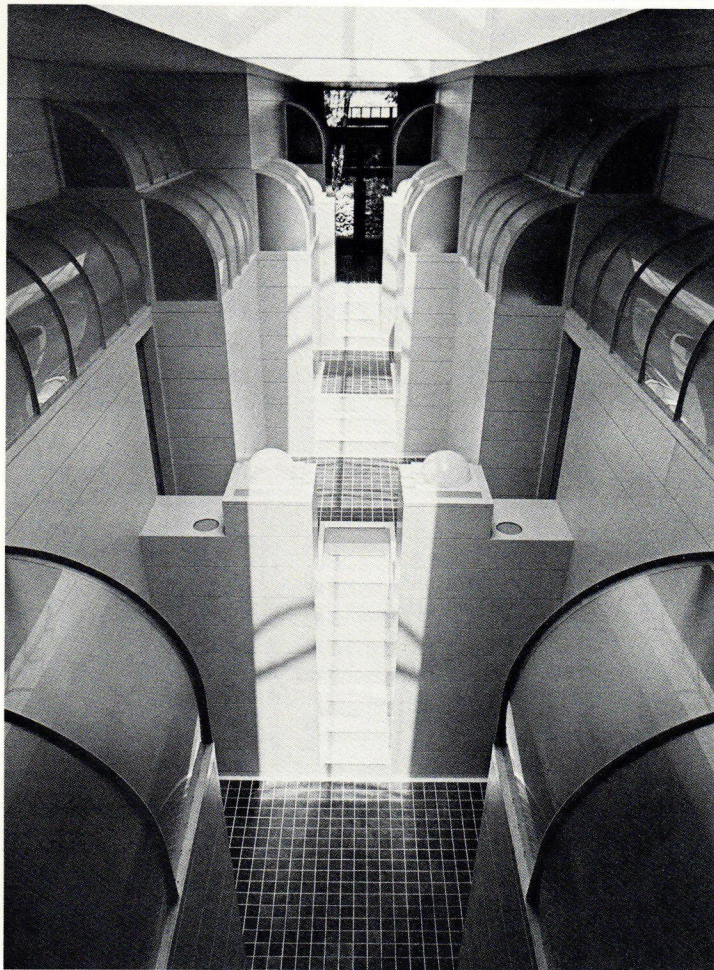
Japan is not alone in this circumstance: every modern nation shares these attributes to some degree. But Japan displays



Expressions of Modern Architecture in Japan



Interior view of Hara House (1974) and axonometrics. Architect: Hiroshi Hara.



this fusion of apparently contradictory forces with a clarity and intensity which makes it a paradigm of late 20th century industrial culture. As a result, the attempts of Japanese architects to address these conditions in their architecture take on international significance.

Japanese modern architecture, in its intensity, diversity and innovation, has always been a dynamic reflection of its complex culture. During the post-war era, the unparalleled worldwide surge in industrialization and the powerful influences of the thriving Modern Movement, helped create an architectural movement in Japan called Metabolism. Western rationalism and a fascination with high technology was combined with a uniquely Japanese notion of metabolic change and growth in an attempt to bring order to the rapidly developing urban environment.

Metabolist architects like Kenzo Tange,

Kiyonori Kikutake and Kisho Kurokawa developed monumental mega-structures designed to grow and change as the needs of society changed and its technology advanced. These flexible high-tech interpretations of Corbu's Radiant City (with such names as "City in the Sky," "Helix City" and "Ocean City") were remarkable in their scale and form. However, as with their counterparts in the West, traditional patterns of life were for the most part ignored. Technology was relied upon to provide an ordered environment of the future. Unfortunately, the results were detached from their earthly contexts and severely limited in meaning.

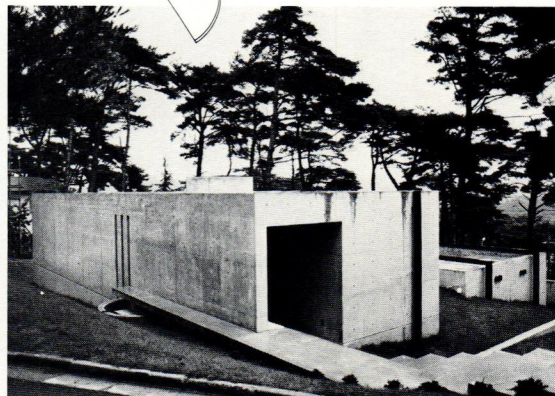
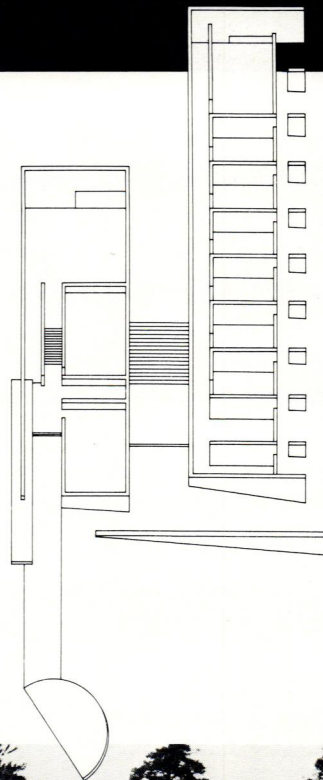
Since that time, Japanese architects have continued to strive with characteristic vigor towards new visions of architecture in Japan. In the early '70s—again

paralleling trends in the West—Metabolism and the values it represented were rejected by many young Japanese architects. In late 1977, *Japan Architect* inevitably announced the birth of Post-Metabolism and once again the work that resulted was uniquely innovative. Whereas during the Metabolist period architectural endeavor was more or less a unified effort towards a common goal, the Post-Metabolists were highly individualistic. Every architect seemed to have his own vision of a new architecture to espouse. But in buildings such as Hiromi Fuji's three-dimensional grid houses and Monta Mozuma's "Anti-

Interior, exterior and plan of the Kosbino Residence (1981). Architect: Tadao Ando.



William Leddy



Dwelling Box," the work often seemed strident, almost desperate—obtuse architectural constructions divorced from human reality.

Recently, however, with the work of a small group of architects—Hiroshi Hara, Tadao Ando, Arata Isozaki, Kazuo Shinohara and Itsuko Hasegawa, to name a few—a new maturity and confidence has emerged. Although their idioms vary widely, these architects share a common architecture. They reject technology as its major determinant and celebrate the rediscovery and reinterpretation of the full range of Japanese architectural expression: space, light, sequence, material and symbol as givers of an architectural presence. They are concerned with finding an expression of function and spirit, of technology and tradition appropriate to modern Japanese life. As in traditional Japanese architecture, how a space *feels*

is once again important.

Two of these architects, Tadao Ando and Hiroshi Hara, are particularly representative of the range of interests of this group. Tadao Ando is an enigmatic rising star. Within an architectural hierarchy which places great importance upon academic credentials, Ando has never received formal architectural training. Unlike the majority of his influential colleagues who work and teach in Tokyo, Ando has declined several teaching positions at major universities, preferring the more intimate student-teacher relationship of his small atelier 300 miles away in Osaka. Nevertheless, through his work and occasional writings he has become an increasingly influential spokesman in the search for new expressions in Japanese modern architecture.

Since establishing his atelier in 1970, Ando has created a series of buildings,

primarily residences, in which he has attempted to bring a greater depth of meaning to the chaotic modern environment. Through the marriage of the practical and the metaphysical aspects of daily life, he creates a uniquely Japanese architectural expression of this "duality of existence." Ando has written, "I want to charge architecture with a sense of life, and a feeling of substantial existence by creating simple geometric forms, with materials as limited as possible at present."²

In hopes of bringing greater clarity to the relationship of people and things, he has taken the reductivist aesthetic of the traditional *Sukiya* concept (made famous by the tea ceremony and the spare, elegant tea houses built for this ritual) reapplying it in modern terms. Ando's buildings are reduced to essences: walls, floor and roof of meticulously cast concrete; openings filled with delicately detailed wood or

Traditional Japanese house and detail of Shoji panel.



glass; and light. Ando considers light to be one of his most important materials, and in this regard the influence of Louis Kahn can be seen. However, his palette is broader and more expressive than Kahn's, using soft, even light together with bright direct shafts which knife across the walls, animating and enriching his spaces.

For Ando, structure is important only insofar as it helps to symbolize place. He has used heavy concrete frames, as in the Onishi Residence and the Matsumoto Residence, and walls, as in the "Wall House" and the early Azuma Residence, to create a "human zone" which blocks out the city and provides an isolated environment. The resulting buildings take on an ascetic Zen-like spirituality in which the "Japanese-ness" lies in the voids rather than in the forms.

With the sense of life generated by this approach to form and materials as a medi-

*ating element, it becomes possible to inspire contact between people and things on a deeper level and in this way to evolve new relations between them. This in turn will enable human beings to hope for the emergence of a new place in which to experience the kind of certain self-knowledge that people today are losing.*³

Hiroshi Hara addresses some of the same issues in a very different way. A professor at Tokyo University since 1969, he has conducted extensive research into vernacular dwelling forms throughout Asia, Africa, Central America and the Middle East. Undoubtedly, this experience has given Hara a unique perspective on the architecture of his own country and helped to foster his deep interest in the establishment of a new and profound dialogue between tradition and technological progress.

*We should carefully look at the particularity of local life style and natural condition. I am not going to say that we should go back to the good old days. I say we should try to find [a] new co-existing system which covers modernism and tradition independently.*⁴

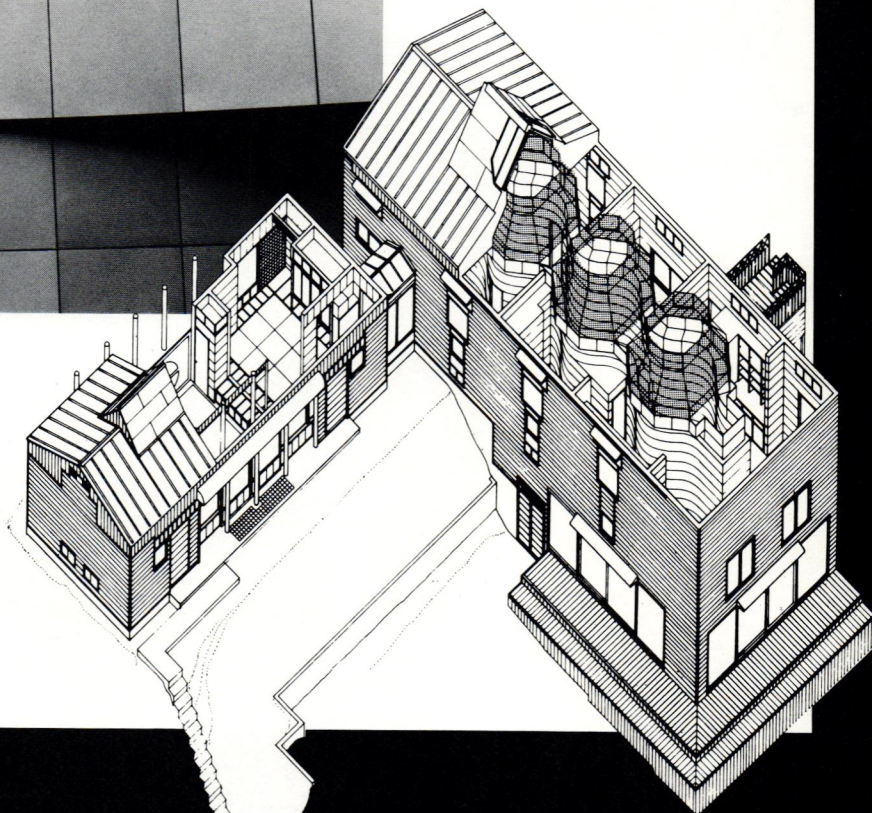
In his five completed "Reflection Houses," Hara has attempted to address modern urban problems with an architectural language which has its roots in tradition but results in non-traditional space suitable to the present. While the exteriors of the houses are highly sympathetic to their environment—clad with wood siding and fenestrated in a more or less traditional manner—the interiors are unique.

Just as the traditional Japanese urban house turns inward, away from the street, while visually borrowing scenery from the

Wall detail of Kamioka Town Hall by architect Arata Isozaki. Below: Niram House by Hiroshi Hara.



William Leddy



outside, these houses respond to increasing density and chaos in the modern urban environment by reducing the number of openings to the exterior and bringing in light from above. In this regard there is some similarity to Ando's approach, but unlike Ando's stoic enclosures, Hara's spaces are rich with texture and rhythm. A soft, sunlit landscape is developed within the building as the central public space with small enclosed private rooms arranged symmetrically on either side. Entry to these spaces is highly processional, often stepping down with the site (as in his own house), thereby enhancing further their special qualities of place.

The work of Japanese architects such as Ando and Hara actively and thoughtfully addresses some of the pressing issues of modern life in Japan. It is an architecture in search of "Japanese-ness"—of

expressions which are inextricably connected to time and place, encompassing the dualities and complexities of modern Japanese culture. Instead of attempting to impose a new monumental physical order upon the city, as the Metabolists did, these architects attempt to redefine and clarify existing orders at a smaller, more manageable scale. For Ando and Hara this represents a return to a poetic architecture which places the satisfaction of the spirit on an equal basis with that of function, and uses technology once again as a means to an end, rather than as an end in itself.

¹ Ada Louise Huxtable, "Is Modern Architecture Dead?" *New York Review*, July 16, 1981, pp. 17-22.

² Tadao Ando, "New Relations Between the Space and the Person," *Japan Architect*, Oct.-Nov. 1977, pp. 44.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Hiroshi Hara, "Anti-Traditional Devices," *Kencbiku Bunka*, Dec. 1979, pp. 80-81.

Marsba Maytum and William Leddy are both architects practicing in San Francisco. Graduates of the University of Oregon, they work respectively for the firms of Esberick Homsey Dodge and Davis and the nascent firm of William Leddy Architect. Their article is based on a trip to Japan last autumn.

Japan's Architectural Schizophr

STUDIO ALTA



William Leddy

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Magazines like A + U and Process, though published primarily for a Japanese readership, are exclusively concerned with foreign work and developments. Can any other country boast magazines devoted exclusively to foreign developments?

A Hypothesis By MINORU TAKEYAMA

JAPAN FACES HARSH CRITICISM for its current (and overwhelming) excess of exports over imports. This outgoing balance of trade seems particularly upsetting to those countries suffering from the reverse situation. But when it comes to information, Japan clearly imports much more than it exports. One scholar who attended a recent international publishing conference reported that, by comparing Japanese publications on the US and England, and US and English publications on Japan, he determined that Japan publishes about twelve times more material about these countries than they publish about Japan.

This is equally true for music. Ask a Japanese youngster which American singer he likes and he will reel off more than twenty names; he'll even croon their latest hits. Can any American recognize any Japanese song newer than "Sukiyaki"—which is already 25 years old?

To me, this is an indication not only that American influence in music is overwhelming in Japan, but that Japanese receptivity to cultural material from abroad is substantial.

There is certainly an excess of imported knowledge among Japanese architects. Some magazines, like *A + U* and *Process*, though published primarily for a Japanese readership, are exclusively concerned with foreign work and developments. Can any other country boast magazines devoted exclusively to foreign information? Editors would lose patience and readers would lose interest. But Japanese readers absorb such a flood of foreign news every month that they can claim familiarity with most current world developments. If you ask any architectural student in Japan to pick his ten favorite works of modern architecture, he will without fail choose five or more foreign works—most likely drawn from a larger number recently featured in the Japanese architectural press.

This interest in foreign developments exists in a context of a general hunger for the most up-to-date information. Not only these "foreign reports" type magazines, but also the domestically-oriented ones are filled with news of what's new. At least ten magazines are competing each month for the architectural reader's attention, and those with the latest "stuff" attract the widest readership (the magazine *Shinkenchiku*, for example, literally means "new architecture"). Architectural magazines in Japan operate in a pressure cooker atmosphere, and their staffs are generally quite young. Because of their youthfulness, they are quite permissive toward their contributors—certainly they are much less selective than the editors of American magazines of similar content. In

consequence, the contents of these magazines tend to be filled with "multivalent qualities" (i.e., a mixed bag).

Thus, paging through Japanese architectural magazines is somewhat like travelling through any street in any Japanese city—an experience in heavy schizophrenic symptomology for the outsider. In fact, the Japanese streetscape presents an immense variety of morphological effects. It looks like an experiment in search of the outer limits. How many varieties of style and form, from every different time and place, can be packed into one cultural scene? As Roland Barthes described it, the Japanese urban streetscape is "an empire of signs."

From my viewpoint, the ordinary streetscape is a paradigm of the basic elements of the Japanese urban structure which Japanese architects confront in their creative activities. To analyze these elements, consider my experiences with Japanese and American architectural students.

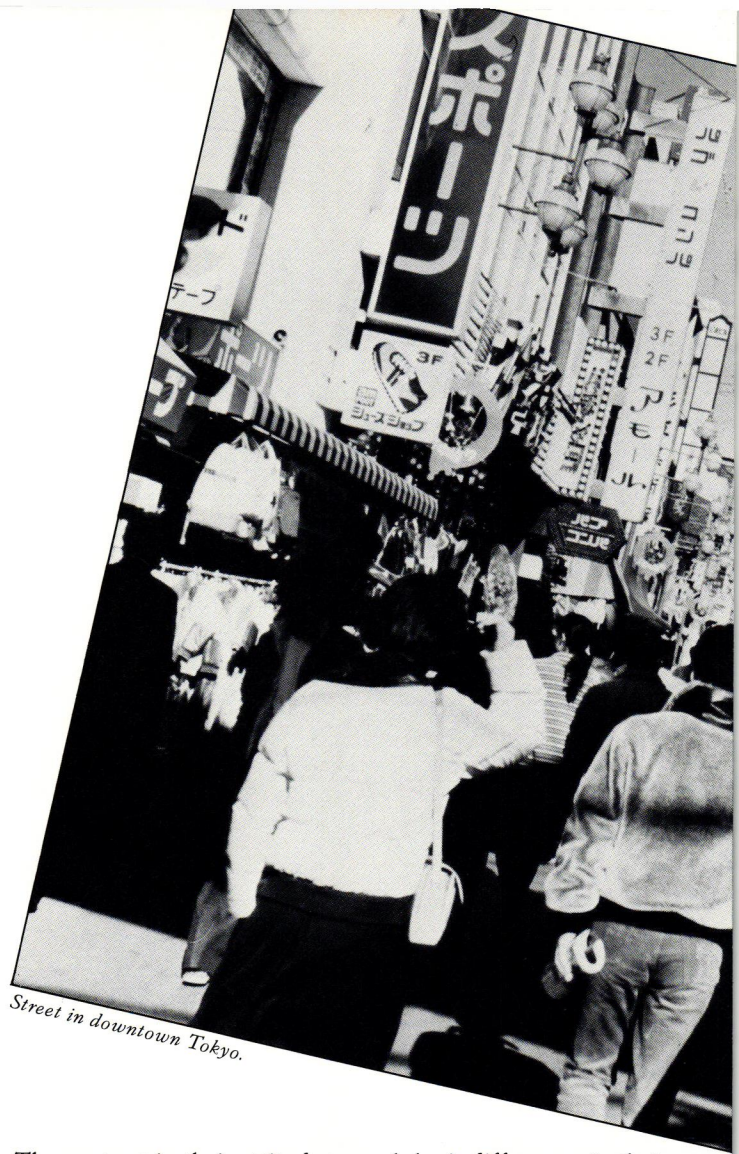
A few years ago, I taught several design studios at UC Berkeley. The design problem I gave the students was similar in content to one I had given my students at Musashino Art University in Tokyo, where I have an appointment. It was an extension of my own interest in the semiological study of city streets.

"Broadway '77," the design problem, was developed together with Bob Herman and Jennifer Clements, San Francisco architects and sometime lecturers at Berkeley. We first asked the students to develop an understanding of Broadway as an urban phenomenon—concentrating on the North Beach segment of the street—and then to respond to their understanding through the medium of their design solutions for a particular site on the street.

One of the reasons I selected Broadway as a context is that it is as visually heterogeneous and chaotic as some streets in Tokyo—one of which, Omotesando, I had used for a similar design problem in Japan. When I gave this problem to my Japanese students, none of them had paid the slightest attention to the existing "codes" of Omotesando at all. Instead, they projected something entirely new—even visionary—onto the existing environment. They insisted on designing buildings that they had never experienced in reality—particularly in the vicinity of Omotesando. Some of the project could not in fact be entered by any normal circulation route—one needed a pair of wings to make an entrance. Some of the other solutions were really vigorous pieces of contemporary urban sculpture, devoid of any architectural syntax.

I had anticipated a similar response from my American students, but found instead that, without exception, their schemes maintained the existing syntax and context of the Broadway streetscape. They tended to retain the existing physical character of the street—the heights, silhouettes, skyline, scale and proportion of windows and doors, gables and ornamentation. No matter how freely they articulated their individual statements, they also wanted to participate in the existing street and preserve the continuity they had recognized as a visual effect.

What these differing solutions imply is that what is happening on Broadway is fundamentally understandable to American students, while what is happening on Omotesando is incomprehensible—and unacceptable—to my students in Japan. Both streets represent "discontinuous activity" within their respective physical appearances. The rampant commercialism manifest in the various shops and places of entertainment have shaped the streets into chains of unlike elements, orchestrated into streetscapes full of multivalent expressions and contents. As urban phenomena, Broadway and Omotesando are similar, but there is a fundamental difference in their meaning to my students—American and Japanese.

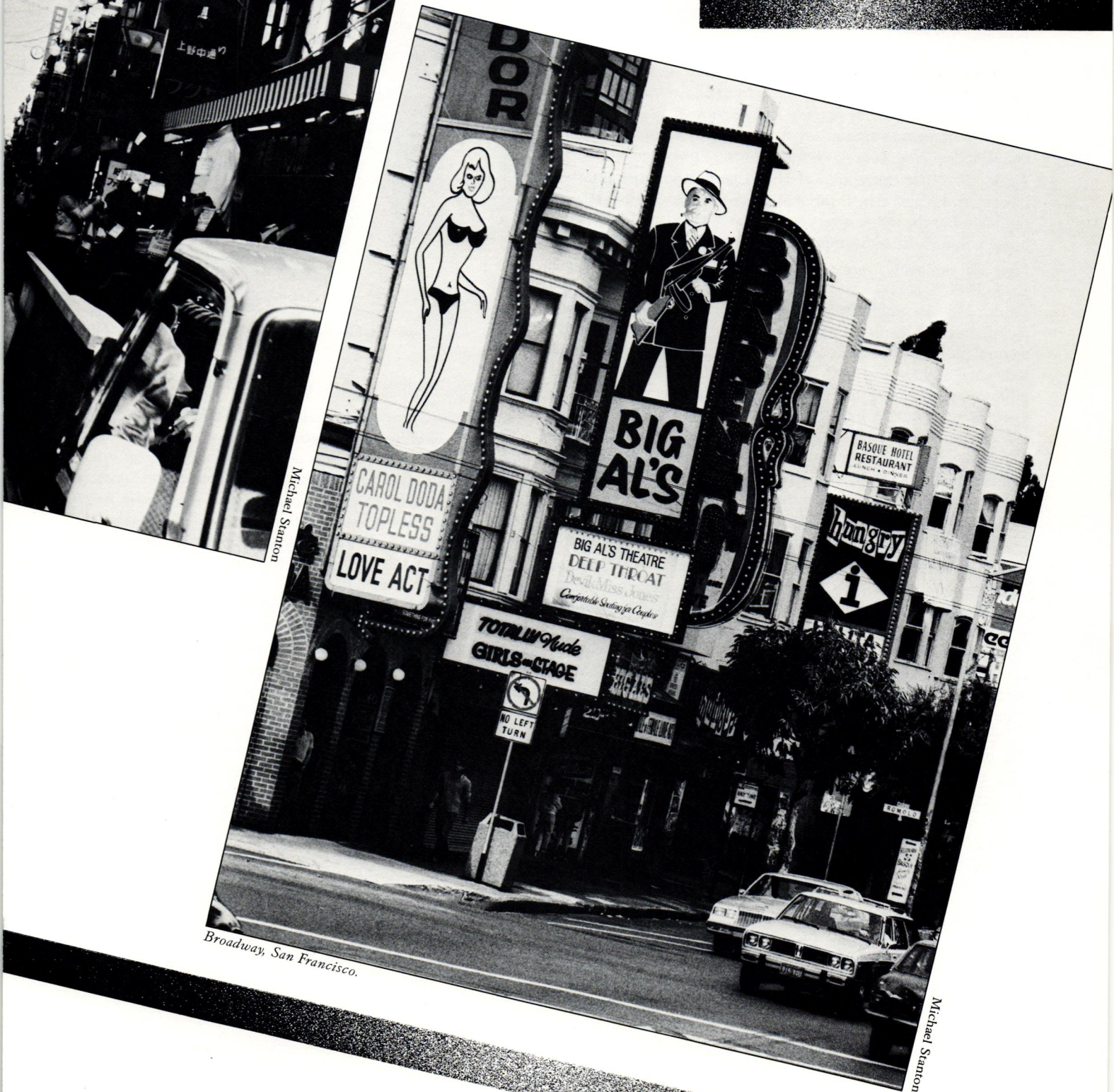


Street in downtown Tokyo.

The contrast in their attitudes reveals basic differences in their perception of the urban context, particularly their understanding of what gives the street its continuity of meaning. I see in them two very different and contrasting patterns of reading the given context: Broadway is perceived by the American students as continuous in *presence*, or *syntagmatic*. Omotesando is seen by the Japanese students as being continuous in *absence*, or *paradigmatic*. To borrow Roland Barthes' metaphor, paradigm is "reading the restaurant menu horizontally," while syntagm is "reading it vertically." The common objective shared by all of the American students was to find a "new neighbor" for the existing neighborhood. The Japanese students, on the other hand, were anxious to discover an unknown "brother" yet to be born, for the sake of the future brotherhood. In both cases, architectural creativity was seen as an attempt to affirm some kind of continuity in a multivalent world, and thereby broaden the essential meaning of architecture.

Minoru Takeyama is an architect who practices in Tokyo and Sapporo, and also teaches at Musashino Art University in Tokyo. A graduate of Harvard GSD, Takeyama worked in Denmark (with Arne Jacobsen and Jorn Utzon), and also taught at the University of Trondheim, Norway, before returning to Japan. He has been associated with a group of architects in Japan called "Archi-Text," and was in 1979 a featured speaker in the "New Wave of Japanese Architecture" lecture series sponsored by the Institute of Architecture and Urban Studies, New York. He has twice lectured at UC Berkeley, and was a Fulbright scholar there in 1975.

The common objective of the American students was to find a "new neighbor" for the existing neighborhood. The Japanese students, on the other hand, were anxious to discover an unknown "brother" yet to be born, for the sake of the future brotherhood.



Broadway, San Francisco.

Michael Stanton

Michael Stanton

Ando & MA: The Interval Between Plane and Plane

Following is an excerpt from an interview with Tadao Ando in his atelier in Osaka in September, 1981, conducted by Marsha Maytum and Bill Leddy.

Your buildings seem very sympathetic to Louis Kahn's work with regard to the emphasis placed upon light and spirit. Kahn once described the process of making architecture as one which goes from the immeasurable to the measurable and back to the immeasurable. How does your design process work?

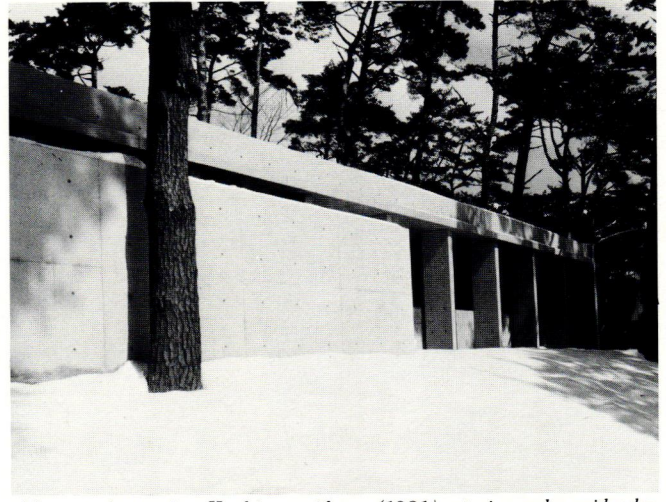
Ando: The first conception of an image is emotional and then I begin to compose in a rational process. The details are very rational—but the whole is very emotional. The spiritual/emotional imagination is the most important aspect.

How do you view your work in the context of current international architecture?

Ando: Modern architecture is a free logic with similar concepts, techniques and materials used throughout the world. But architectural philosophy belongs to each individual. Needless to say, this individual is Japanese, with Japanese spirit and philosophy. My philosophy is intense and limited—it does not apply to anybody else. I want to achieve a modern architecture which only Japanese can create. I want to create a richer world by reaching within myself to discover a more ascetic, delicate and refined architecture using limited materials—to capture nature within the abstracted planes of walls and floors, and make space live. In other words, I want to design buildings where people feel as if they could dip their hands into the light streaming in and feel wrapped in the wind.

The word MA (translated by Arata Isozaki as the concept of space and time or "interval") is often used to describe uniquely Japanese spacial qualities. Do you feel that the concept of MA is present in your work?

Ando: It is very difficult to explain MA. For example, there is the MA of action in Noh Theatre or the MA of speech in a performance. It is a kind of pause which enhances the quality of a speech for the audience. We think it is the moment which anticipates the next sound or action. It prepares our sensitivity to catch the meaning of the art in words, music or dance. As Mr. Oono tells us in "Visible and Invisible City," the Japanese temperament prefers a relationship of objects through which the atmosphere flows slowly. In the West, space is condensed—a solid mass. But in Japan, as you may notice in Japanese cities and architecture, space consists of a layering of planes. MA is the interval between plane and plane. We interpret the space created by artificial order as this interval. While I am not strongly conscious of MA at the point of conception in my designs, the sensitivity of this interval is in accordance with what I have designed. I am simultaneously conscious of both space which is created by the conscious mind and MA (interval) which is created by the emotions or senses. Through the relationship of architectural elements, of building to building and building to site, I am making a conscious effort to understand both types of space; the physical and the sensual.



Above and opposite: Koshino residence (1981) exterior and corridor by Tadao Ando.

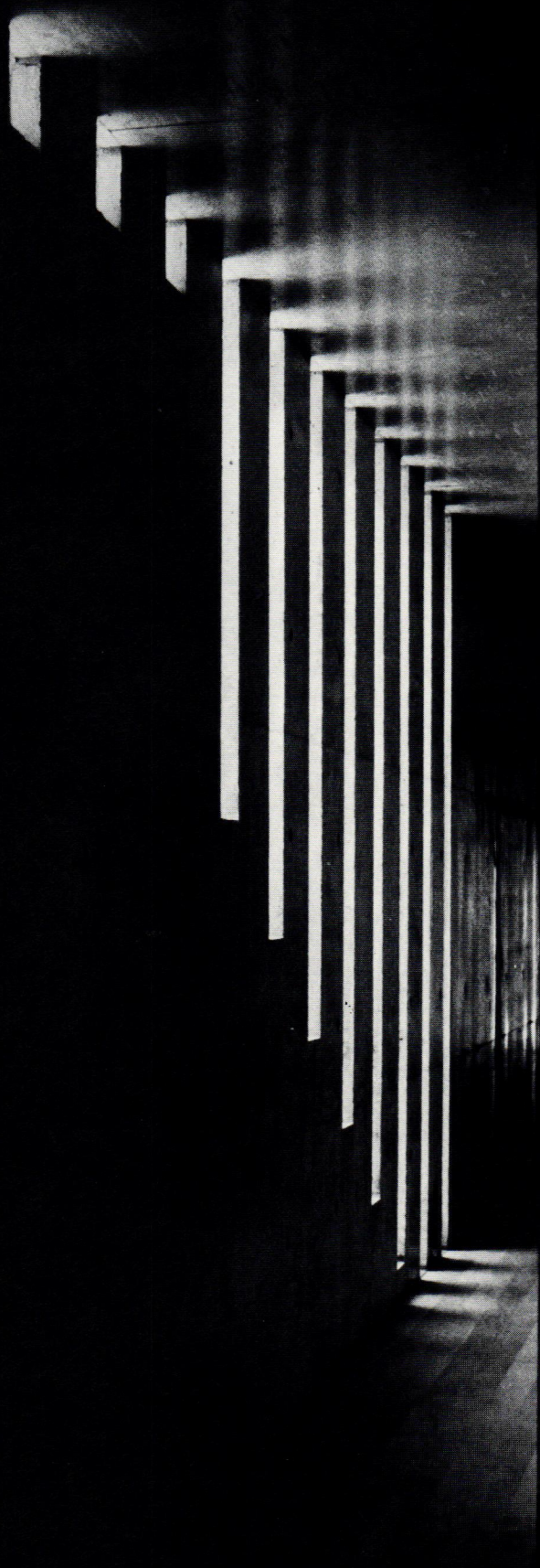
Koshino Residence: Observations by Ando

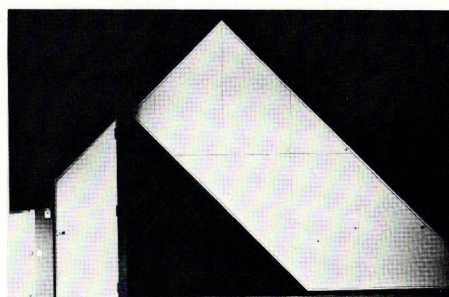
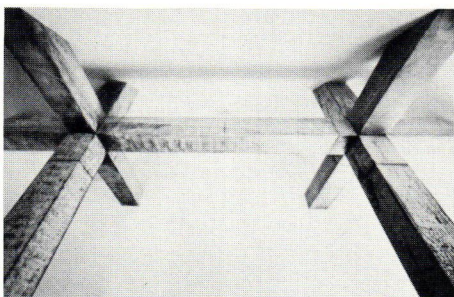
Two inorganic concrete boxes exist, half buried, on a deep green slope. The building is composed of a courtyard flanked by two volumetrically different units which are placed parallel to each other with an underground connection. One volume contains two levels: the lower level accommodates the double height living room, the kitchen, and the dining room; and the upper level, the master bedroom and study room. The other volume houses six rooms for children and tatami rooms all being placed in a row, a lobby, and a bathroom.

The smoothly finished stepping courtyard generated in between the two volumes connotes a coverlet placed over the sloping contour of the site. In other words, the stepping of the courtyard is the symbolic representation of the intrinsic nature of site. The courtyard is an outdoor living room, and the wide stairs receive and reflect the natural light trickling through the trees and serve as a stage on which the living unfolds. It is an exterior space, artificially created by isolating a part of nature.

The weather conditions in this area required the building to be equipped with a defense mechanism toward severe coldness. Each and every room faces south, conforming to the natural slope of the hill. On the north side of the row of rooms, a corridor envelops the chambers. This narrow space, sandwiched between two walls, shuts out the cold air from the outside. For the same reason the building has been buried half a level below ground.

In this residence, the narrow corridor between the two walls exists within the building, and acts as the generator for the various encounters of light and shadows in the dim space. The regularly opened slits are the sole means for delivering light into this long and narrow space. The streaks of light are absorbed to transform the space with the change of time.

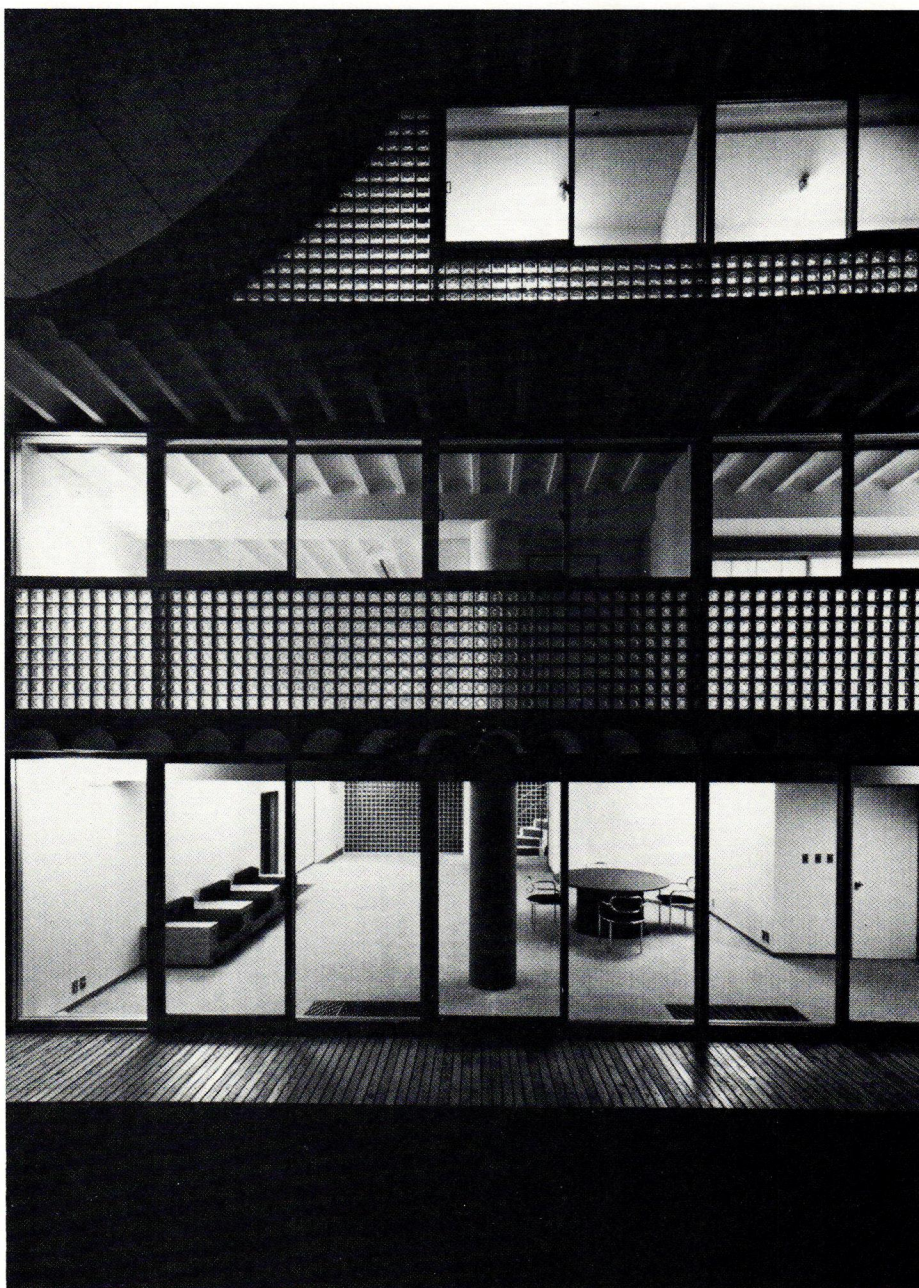




THE THREE MAJOR figures of contemporary Japanese architecture are Arata Isozaki, Fumihiko Maki and Kazuo Shinohara. Both Isozaki and Maki were peripheral associates of the Metabolists—the futurist, technologically-oriented group that was active throughout the 1960s. Their work in many ways represents offshoots of Modernism. Maki's pragmatic, humanistic approach is an attempt to save Modernism through greater concern for context, while Isozaki has cast himself in the role of provocateur, injecting his aggressive buildings like irritants in the shell of the city. Shinohara, however, has always distanced himself from this mainstream.

Of the three, Shinohara is the least familiar figure in the West but this is changing rapidly. In recent years, he has received much recognition in Europe, and the exhibit of his work in New York City may generate greater interest in his houses among American observers.

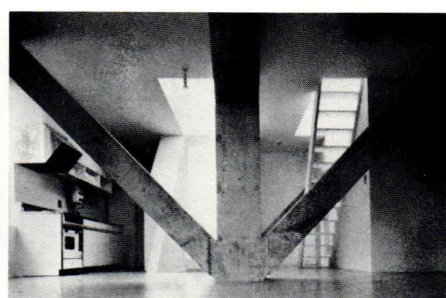
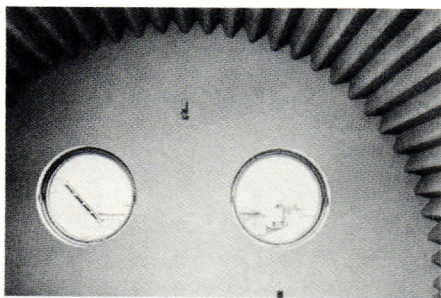
Recognition has been slow in coming because he is the least accessible of major Japanese architects. Unlike more orthodox practitioners—but like many writers and artists—Shinohara does not choose to “talk shop” in the conventional sense. Perhaps, because his work is highly personal, he must be wary lest he reveal and thereby exhaust his inner life. His elliptical writing makes the texts of Isozaki and Maki seem crystal clear. Just as his words both enlighten and obscure, his buildings have a dual quality which makes categorization difficult. They are character-



By HIROSHI WATANABE

Kazuo Shinohara: “House Under High Power Lines.” Small photos above show details from various Shinohara houses.

KAZUO SHINOHARA



ized both by engagement and detachment, calculated precision and off-handedness, intuition and logic. Something of this dual nature is implied in his idea of architecture as "a savage machine."

In his "house under high-power lines," for example, the concrete roof is depressed to produce concave curves, but the rationale for this precise geometry is the presence of overhead power lines, underneath which a certain clearance must be maintained by law. The mock gravity with which this circumstantial factor is treated provides a wry commentary on contextualism in Japan's anarchic cityscape.

Shinohara's career is somewhat unusual. Born in 1925, he studied mathematics and was teaching at Tokyo Medical University when he decided to change his profession. He went back to school to study architecture under Kiyoshi Seike. Since the early '50s, he has designed houses at a rate of about one per year. Since 1962, he has been on the faculty of Tokyo Institute of Technology; his presence at this very technically-oriented institution is itself an anomaly.

Shinohara has gone through at least two changes of style: from the Kugayama House (1954) to the Suzusho House (1968), his buildings showed evidence of his great interest in Japanese traditions (his 1967 doctoral thesis was entitled a "Study of Space Composition of Japanese Architecture"). Subsequently, Shinohara began to design houses in which the traditional influences were less apparent—cubical compositions whose internal organizations were almost invariably split by a "fissure." The House in Higashi-Tamagawa (1973) belongs to this group. On the outside, this exposed concrete structure appears monolithic, yet inside, the house is divided in two by a two-story space that runs from the entrance

to the back of the house; there is no connection between the two halves at the second floor. Shinohara employed the word "fissure" to represent not only this particular spatial feature, but also his deliberate break with tradition.

More recently, Shinohara has designed sculptural works in which the columns and the roof—the dominant elements in traditional Japanese architecture—reappear as major motifs, but with no visible trace of historicism. His House in Uehara (1976) was a pivotal building. This is a

Shinohara's buildings are characterized both by engagement and detachment, calculated precision and off-handedness, intuition and logic. Something of this dual nature is implied in his idea of architecture as "a savage machine."

two-story concrete house supported on three pairs of massive columns, topped by diagonal struts. A vaulted penthouse was added on the roof at the last minute and contributes to the general air of incongruity and violent juxtaposition. The ground floor is a studio and the major spaces are on the second floor. Here, the columns and struts dominate, nearly displacing the occupants. In a sense, the house is almost a pretext for the columns.

Foreign observers often liken Shinohara to Seiichi Shirai (b. 1905), a comparison Shinohara considers particularly odious. Superficially, at least, there are some resemblances: they have both been fascinated by traditional Japanese archi-

tecture; they are both individualistic, if not idiosyncratic, designers, who took no part in the futurist experiments of the 1960s; and they were both something of cult figures before their wider recognition in the '70s. Yet there are clear differences: Shinohara labels Shirai's work "fetishist," and in the work of the older architect there are signs of an obsessive interest in particular forms and themes. From the Atom Bomb Memorial project to the Kaishokan, Shirai's sexual references have become more explicit and perhaps even unsavory.

One can also find instances of anthropomorphism in Shinohara's work, but these are less obvious and sensational. And there is always the precise geometry that transforms any such traces, human or historicist, into abstraction.

Shinohara has had a great deal of influence among younger architects, and a number of them are considered members of a "Shinohara School," including Kazunari Sakamoto, who studied under Shinohara but did no design work with him; Itsuko Hasegawa, who was actually a member of his studio; and Toyo Ito, who has had no real academic connection to Shinohara, but whose work (such as the U-shaped House in Nakano-Honcho) clearly reflects Shinohara's influence.

Shinohara, however, disclaims any such school, and Sakamoto has said that such a school could only be acknowledged on the condition that Shinohara himself were excluded from membership. A continually creative architect, Shinohara eludes classification and remains aloof from trends—even those he may himself have started.

Hiroshi Watanabe is an architectural critic and the Japanese correspondent of Progressive Architecture.

Architecture as Savage Machine

On Architecture and Architecture in Japan and the West

By FUMIHIKO MAKI

Architecture is a container for spaces human beings can immediately see or touch. But as part of the city, it is also a more abstract medium for a wide range of information. This dual function has become increasingly apparent.

THE UNSTABLE—or, alternatively, exciting—condition of today's architectural scene is the result of the co-existence in architects or even in a single architect of various roles or types which have developed over the past several thousand years, out of the competition, conflict and tension between these different roles or types.

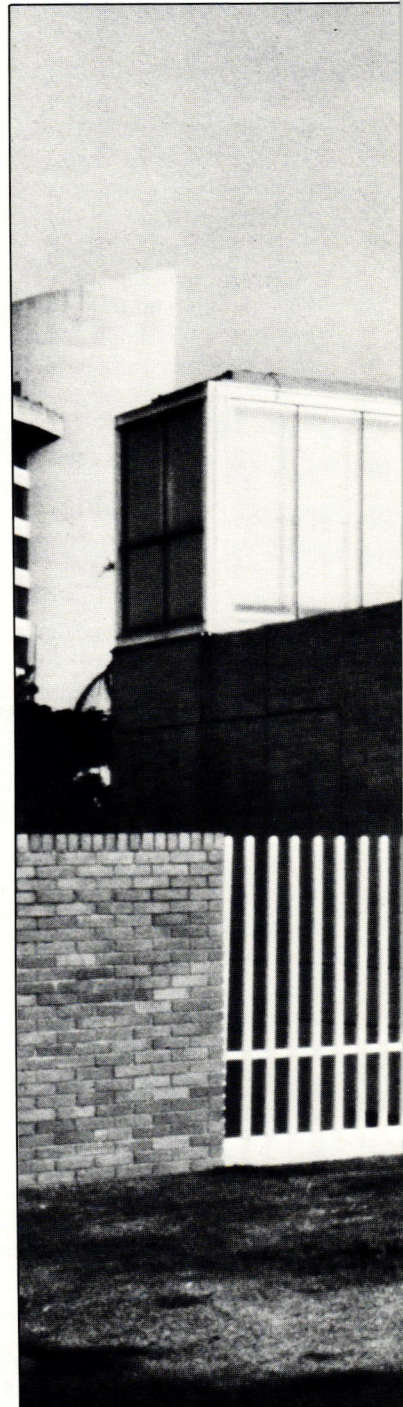
Certainly, over the last century, professional bodies like the UIA or AIA have managed to secure a certain position and social role for architects, and most architects continue to act in the client's interest, contributing to society and also seeking their individual aesthetic satisfaction. But one of the characteristics of the present age is the large scale and complexity of the various projects architects participate in, and the consequent appearance of highly-organized architectural teams. The Greek architect needed a wide knowledge, and the Renaissance produced geniuses like Alberti and Da Vinci who excelled in many fields; but in the 20th century, it is not a single individual but the organization which fulfills that condition.

The largest of these groups employs several thousand people, handling a wide

variety of projects. In Japan, the largest office employs 1,500. Nor is the expanded team approach limited to architecture: the major contractors in Japan—which often have large design sections—offer comprehensive design and construction services and handle large-scale turn-key projects. In the US, firms like Bechtel are transforming themselves along similar lines. This is perhaps an inevitable result of 20th century capitalistic society and its economic structure. Like other large-scale industries, these organizations are gradually increasing their share of the architectural market, becoming increasingly drawn into fierce competition among themselves. In Japan, many of the best architectural graduates enter these firms as designers, engineers, and eventually as administrators. At the University of Tokyo, where I teach, forty out of fifty-five graduates each year commit themselves—essentially for life—to these companies, attracted by the security and the opportunities to work on large projects that they offer.

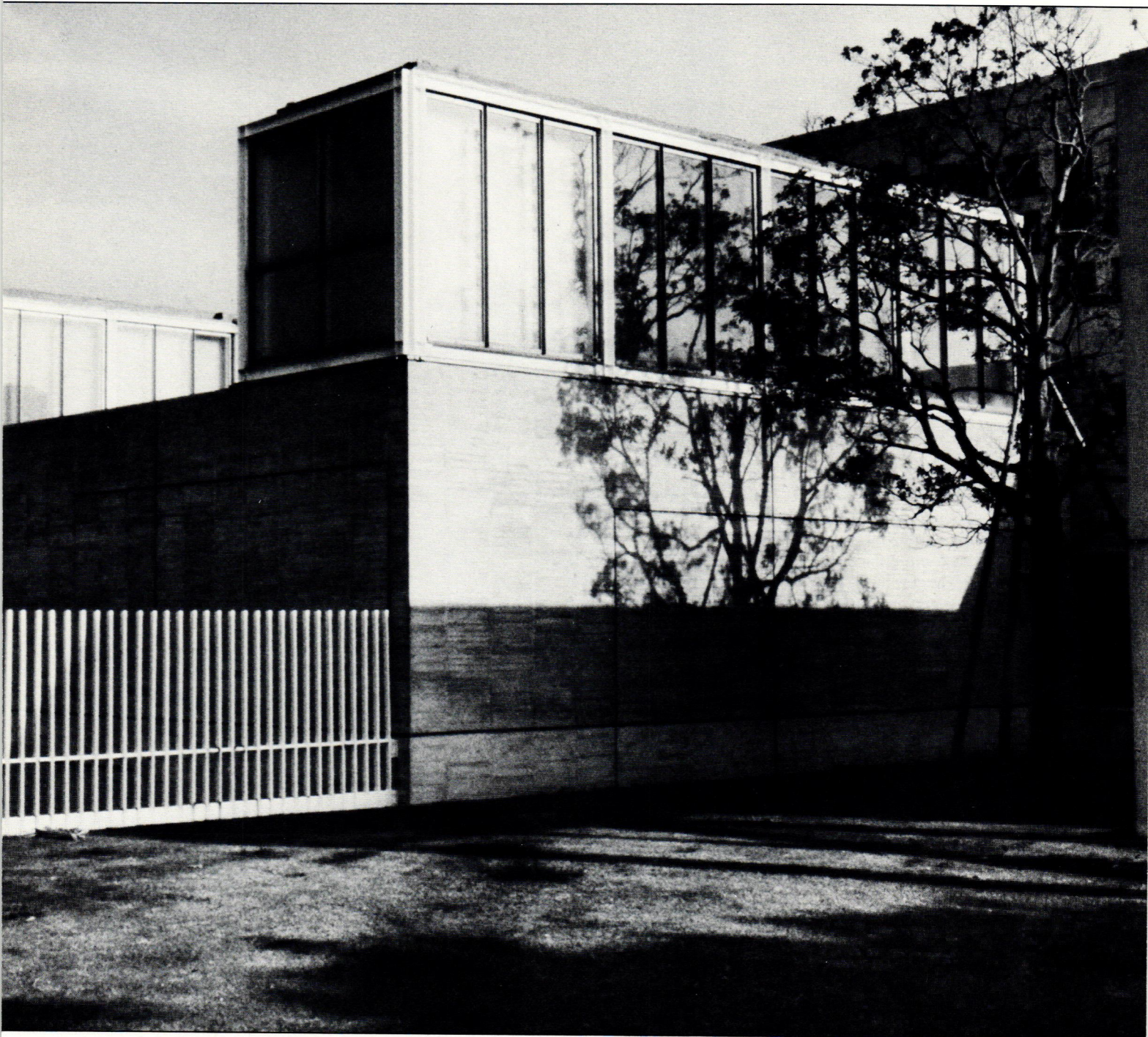
The corporate architect/engineers have essentially the same mentality in every country, whether in the US, Japan or West Germany. Their firms also have a common approach to design. It is interesting that this is as true of firms that began as small offices and expanded as with firms that were—at least in terms of design—large from the beginning. One draws the inevitable conclusion that there is an intimate relationship between the universality of their designs and the international style produced by Modernism.

MODERN architecture and functionalism began as a rejection of the styles of the late 19th and early 20th centuries—as a way for a minority of ideologically-oriented architects to advance a social thesis. The initial ideological aspect gradually disappeared from functionalist, Modernist architec-



Iwasaki Museum, Kyushu

tural Practice



Michael Harris

ture. Its formal flexibility in dealing with a variety of programs, its solution of every climatic problem through new technology (materials and mechanical systems), its elimination of all idiosyncracies characteristic of architecture to that time (including decoration), and its emphasis on economy made it possible for everyone to use and comprehend the International Style as a common language. It had a wide appeal—to public and private clients, and to democratic and authoritarian governments.

For me, its salient characteristic is really its sociological aspect. Today's social and economic organization has helped develop functionalist architecture, and the reverse is also true. As the world becomes more and more organized, organization men require an easily and universally comprehensible design language as a professional communication medium. Of course, there is a margin left over for innovation and creativity, but what is important is that such innovations and creativity are expressed within a common idiom. This inherent, formal communicability has made it possible for the new language to permeate modern society—at least until now—and it had the additional advantage that it could be bastardized to the level of architectural understanding of any practitioner.


In Japan, and in many colonial countries during the first period of modernization, Western classicism remained the architecture of the privileged classes. In contrast, Modernism easily overwhelmed even the vernacular forms. While the technologically-oriented utopian scenarios of the early 20th century ideologists were never really given a chance, technology-oriented Modernist architecture has permeated our urban environment. For better or worse, it is radically changing the aspect of our cities.

I would like to posit an antithesis to the modern internationalism of organized society and the organization architect—the Anti-Modernism of the individualist



School in Yokohama

Michael Harris



architect. If the large architectural organizations represent an expansive force, with an ability to deal with the complex and large-scale development and redevelopment of the urban environment demanded of society by means of the universality of their language, the antithesis represents a contractive force, tending to draw inward upon the individual. This contractive force, like the expansionary force, is an expression of a basic characteristic of late 20th century urban society.

THE CITIES, which have grown phenomenally in the 20th century, have by their instability produced widespread alienation. Today, when the sense of insecurity about the future is far stronger than hope, a desire somehow to reconfirm the self through architecture is perhaps inevitable. This may help us understand the conspicuous manifestations of a different Modernism—including Anti-Modernism—which have emerged in the last ten years, and the idea of the architect's role which they represent.

These architects do not necessarily share the same views, making it difficult to contrast them easily with corporate architects. What they do have in common is the fact that their forms are extremely private, and that they themselves are opposed to functionalism, progressivism, and the existing authorities who represent these values. If the power of corporate architects lies in the organization, then these other architects depend on the force of the media and the cultural elite.

For example, the group of architects known as the Neo-Rationalists declare the autonomy of architecture, denying the significance of history and tradition, and claiming to find meaning only in the architectural forms themselves. The Neo-Realist position, on the other hand, is more conscious of history and culture.

The interest in the symbolism of architectural forms, particularly on their sur-

face, and in the manipulation of interior space, is not limited to these architects alone, but is shared by many young architects in the West and in Japan. They show no interest in the preoccupations of architects in the '60s—that is, in technology, in the improvement of building quality, in innovative programs. In many cases, they want to delve more deeply into metaphysical, artistic or private worlds, and to express them by means of surface icons and the manipulation of interior spaces. Although these worlds may be comprehensible only to their creators, they can at the same time be understood as criticism of an increasingly controlled society, and as acts of rebellion against that society.

Unlike the ideologists who have played the role of the avant-garde—Team X, for example—these architects have no progressivist philosophy. As the Italian historian Manfredo Tafuri has said, the increasing control and organization of society, whether under the capitalist or socialist system, has meant the loss of ideology in architecture, which must content itself to be the rear guard of society. Unlike the angry youths who rejected the System during the Vietnam War and the university disorders, these architects are not vocal in their protests. They seem rather to bypass the world of active practitioners and corporate architects who represent the System and create a separate world for themselves. For some of them, the prolonged slump in building has meant an escape into drawings. But submerging oneself in a private world devoid of ideological content can lead to a dangerous "world without exit" when it starts to feed on narcissistic tendencies.

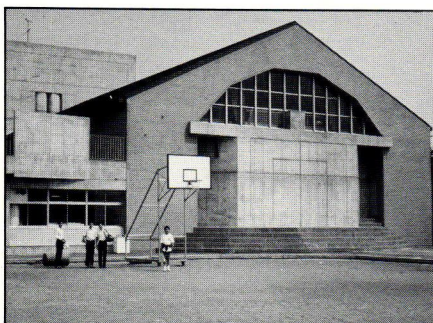
ANOTHER group worth noting is the even smaller number of architects who love buildings as crafted objects. They carry on the tradition of artisans which has survived in architecture. Those who in the Middle

Ages found solace in serving God and the artisans who have carried on the tradition of Japanese wooden architecture are very much alike. The Arts and Crafts movement helped keep this tradition alive in the industrial age. Today, this interest in craftsmanship is what has replaced the old world of the vernacular. Whether the material used is stone, wood or brick, the aim is to draw out its inherent qualities—in short, its spirit. With no ambition to get public attention, those craftsmen who can somehow make a living are probably the most spiritually-fulfilled architects today.

The architect can be an artist, polemicist, craftsman, organizer or ideologist. Nor should we overlook the existence of a few architects, like Aldo van Eyck, who take an anthropocentric stance and try to find an ideology within Modernism. The majority of architects—myself included—fall somewhere between these extremes, and several different types that I have mentioned probably co-exist in any single practitioner. My point is that this wide variety in architectural types, and the increasing lack of communication between architects of different stripes, reflects the very wide ambivalence with which the architectural profession regards itself.

ACCORDING to one Japanese sociologist, professional activity involves two mutually antagonistic principles: on the one hand, a professional is obliged to abide by an abstract principle—namely, that of serving the general public; on the other hand, he must meet the specific demands of particular clients. Trying to satisfy both sets of demands brings on conflicts in the professional, and produces various social problems. There are many ambiguities in the case of architecture. For example, is architecture "private property," or "social object," "technical" or aesthetic and spiritual?" An ambiguity exists as well regarding the

nature of the architect's compensation (which by some lights is a fee and by others a profit) and his character, which can be seen as both progressive and conservative. These ambiguities reflect the social structure of our times, but they also constitute an inherent contradiction in our profession—a contradiction which has suddenly become very conspicuous.



School in Yokohama

From another viewpoint, it can be seen as a conflict between self-expression, the client's interests, and the public's welfare—or as a conflict between the artistic, pragmatist and idealist types of architect. We are aware that these ambiguities will not be easily resolved.

The mutual antipathy of the two extremes—the corporate architect and the individualist architect—is causing the public to distrust the architectural profession. Consider the role of the construction manager: hired by the client to watch over the appointed architect, his presence suggests that the architect's administrative powers over building are being eroded. Another emerging profession is that of the space designer whose role is to determine the most economically efficient space layout for the client (in most cases a developer); the client then hires the architect to put a facade on that layout. In these ways, the traditional role of the architect, which originally integrated planning, designing and building activities, is being gradually fragmented. He

may yet become the exterior equivalent of the interior designer.

UNTIL QUITE RECENTLY, the growth of Japanese metropolises was maintained primarily by the inflow of population from the provinces, but now the natural growth rate is increasing and the social growth rate is decreasing. This means that the urban population maintaining some notion of a "home" in the provinces is gradually decreasing, while those who have known only an urban existence are increasing. At the same time, the average age of the urban population and the percentage of elderly in the cities are rapidly rising. These facts suggest that Japanese cities are structurally quite similar to their Western counterparts.

Another characteristic of Japanese cities is that the great difference which used to exist between material and cultural conditions in cities and in the countryside is, for various reasons, rapidly disappearing. For example, it is no longer strange to find a farming village near a metropolis where only a small percentage of the people are engaged in farm work and the rest are office workers. As the contrast between the countryside and the city becomes blurred, a new mood is growing in the cities—a loss of the optimism we had before the oil shocks. We have the sense now that we can no longer escape to some "home" outside the city, but must live instead in a closed-off domain. This is very much like the condition of immigrants to the United States who abandoned their homelands to live in American cities.

THE AWARENESS THAT the city cannot be permitted to fail—that it represents the last and only hope for most of its inhabitants—is the first prerequisite for creating an urban consciousness. This awareness is also a

sensitivity toward the city. We must recognize that the cities shape human beings as much as they are shaped by them. We are, in a sense, observed by the city as much as we observe cities. One critic has said:

Photography was a new medium for expressing urban sensitivity—an urban medium. Photography brought out the excitement of the city, and the city changed the function of photography. Even when the subject was nature, the perspective was urban and the resulting image was a social landscape.

This sensibility renders people anonymous. Urban spaces are very much like the clinical and dry information and signals emerging from television sets and catalogues. We can see a close relationship between our two-dimensional urban spaces today and recent trends in novels, poetry, painting and motion pictures. Our urban viewpoint is perhaps inevitably abstract, and information and visual images represent powerful media for us.

But at the same time, individuals in this environment seek a more human world—a world whose existence they can physically confirm. The contemporary city dweller lives in a world which is abstract and dematerialized, like the visual images of photography, but he also seeks and creates for himself a world of which he can be sure, both in a physical and temporal sense. It is the fate of the late 20th century dweller to inhabit a world which is both abstract and concrete, and it is the recognition of this which must be the basis for a new urban consciousness.

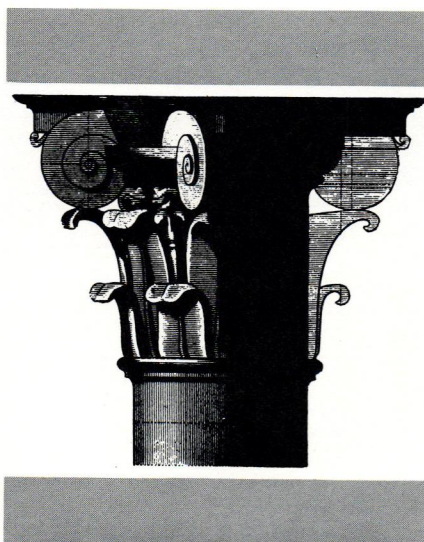
Fumihiko Maki is an architect practicing in Tokyo, and a professor at the University of Tokyo. An architect of international reputation, Maki has taught in the United States at Washington University, among other institutions. This article is an excerpt from his address on the occasion of that University's School of Architecture's 50th Anniversary.

COMMENTS

Continued from page 2

display was like opening an old trunk in the attic. Unlike Krier, however, Graves incorporates his roots in the past so they are always fractured slightly, as if to weaken their claim on him by presenting the forms as slightly crippled or incomplete. Thomas Gordon Smith represents yet another relation to history. He seems to me to be at ease and takes great pleasure in classical forms as he manipulates them in his work, as does Allan Greenberg in his New England classical ghost facade and his State of Connecticut Superior Court Building, née a supermarket. They both seem not to be asking themselves what can the past do for their work but instead they are exploring where they are as a part of a tradition, as architects in the 1980s.

As contemporary architects always feel they must, each architect has used the facade and exhibit space quite differently. There are some spaces like Charles Moore's, full of drawings and others with only social philosophy inside. Some used images overlaying their roots sometimes enigmatically: Robert Stern included with photographs of his work two excellent statements defining his search for iconography for our times. Others like Massimo Scolari, made little use of the interior space or Arata Isozaki, who gave us only an inscrutable rock in a bed of gravel inside. Was he showing us "things as one might want them" as Stern suggests, or is the rock more of Isozaki's roots illustrated in his facade, which combines the traditional Japanese with a contemporary minimalism that is curiously undercut by the play of scales in the entrances? The Hollein exhibit really extends his notions in the facade where columns, trees, and skyscrapers trade realities. Inside he shows us photographs of beautiful storefronts



and even elegant designs for a pair of sunglasses.

It is the four San Francisco architects' facades that have been added to the original Biennale Exhibit that present a real question. Marc Goldstein and the SOM group treat the design with humor, presenting a somewhat enigmatic pyramid of significant painted words. Batey and Mack offer us a beautiful series of air brush drawings of designs behind their facade of mixed materials whose recent introduction to each other has left them still ill at ease, while William Turnbull shows a series of places within places behind a strangely fashionable facade composition of mirrors, classical pedestals, and scenographic tree hangings. Daniel Solomon has included a short and lucid review of architecture's "collective amnesia" in the evolution of modernism and then illustrates, thankfully with little post-modernist stylishness, a contemporary architecture that has a past it is willing to relate to. It was nice that one of our local architects chose to relate to San Francisco for this show's incarnation here. The question that is not asked or dealt with in this show about the past is where is the Bay

Region style? It seems as if it must be still threatening because it isn't quite dead yet.

The show also has an International Gallery collecting together work from all over the world with many marvelous drawings and designs, often of great inventiveness. The attitudes in these are more of what we saw on "La Strada Novissima" and leaves little doubt that modern architecture isn't dead. Rather, it is growing into itself just as other styles have evolved through history by a series of creative bursts of energy followed by refinement, moving from classical to mannerist and in another 100 years perhaps we will have modern Baroque.

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